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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 26 JULY 17, 2006

INSIDE

How Chinese, Japanese immigrants resisted discrimination in the U.S.

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Lone survivor of Sago disaster:

'We expected to be rescued'

Federal officials, company refused to use machinery that has saved miners' lives

Getty Images/Karen Bleier

Randal McCloy, the sole survivor of Jan. 2 disaster at Sago, where 12 miners died on job, and his wife Anna at White House June 15. His account of disaster was just made public.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

PITTSBURGH, July 3—When an explosion ripped through the Sago coal mine in West Virginia at 6:26 a.m. on January 2, the miners trapped inside thought it was just a matter of time before they would be rescued.

Federal rescue officials and company personnel on the scene, however, did not bring in equipment to pinpoint the location of the trapped workers that had been used successfully to save miners trapped underground in 2002 after the Queecreek mine disaster in Pennsylvania, as the workers trapped at Sago had hoped.

These facts became clear from testimony made public last week by the sole survivor of the Sago blast.

Randal McCloy, a 26-year-old roof bolter, was the only miner to survive the Sago disaster. Twelve others perished. McCloy was interviewed in mid-June by state and federal mine

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High court ruling aids 'war on terror'

Legitimizes military trials, U.S. prison at Guantánamo

Getty Images/Mark Wilson

U.S. troops at U.S. Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, watch a prisoner May 9 at notorious Camp Delta, where Washington holds "enemy combatants" indefinitely.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—In a June 29 ruling the U.S. Supreme Court gave its stamp of approval to the Bush administration's plans to conduct military trials of prisoners it has labeled "enemy combatants," being held at the U.S. Naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The trials may proceed, the court said, so long as they conform to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and applicable sections of the Geneva Conventions, and the administration seeks legislative authorization. Administration officials said they would now seek legislation allowing them to proceed with these trials.

Senate majority leader William Frist announced he would introduce legislation on the tribunals after the

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Close U.S. prison at Guantánamo, Cuba!

Free all the inmates!

— statement by SWP candidates, p. 9

Socialists Workers launch election campaign in Minnesota

BY CARLOS CACERES

MINNEAPOLIS, July 4—Socialist Workers Party candidates and their supporters began petitioning here and in the adjacent city of St. Paul today to put the SWP ticket on the ballot for the November elections. They fanned out across the Twin Cities, collecting 760 signatures in one day.

Militant/Tom Baumann

Rebecca Williamson (left), Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, petitions July 4 in Minneapolis to put SWP ticket on ballot.

Rebecca Williamson, 24, a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789, is heading the socialist ticket. She is running for U.S. Senate in the seat now held by Mark Dayton of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL).

"We are presenting a working-class alternative to the Republicans, Democrats, and other capitalist parties," Williamson told the *Militant*. "Every plank in the socialist platform is aimed at uniting

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Puerto Rico: first-ever sales tax is harbinger of more austerity

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Puerto Rico's legislature voted in mid-June to impose the first-ever consumer sales tax on the island. Together with a 38 percent hike in water rates that went into effect July 1, this measure is part of an assault on the "welfare state" the U.S. rulers have relied on for decades to cushion the economic effects of their colonial rule in this Caribbean nation.

In May the administration of Gov. Aníbal Acevedo Vilá organized a two-week layoff of 95,000 public employees on the grounds that it had run out of funds. The shutdown of schools and other government agencies, a de facto lockout, was a warning to work-

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Kentucky miners snap up 'Militant'

BY DAVE FERGUSON

HARLAN, Kentucky—Four supporters of the *Militant* took part in a team here June 23–24 to promote the socialist newsweekly in Harlan County, Kentucky.

We sold 16 subscriptions and 154 copies of the paper in the coal mining communities here over the two days. That brought the total in Harlan County, which has a population of some 32,000, to 31 new subscribers and more than 500 copies over the last month.

Five of the new readers signed up in one hour at a bluegrass concert that many coal miners and their families attended.

One worker there told us he had found a copy of the *Militant* the previous week in a Wal-Mart parking lot. He said he had taken it home and read it, and now wanted a subscription because he liked the coverage on the struggles of miners for safety on the job.

At a railroad crossing on Route 38—the main road linking many of the mines and mining towns in Harlan County—the widow of one of the five miners killed in the May 20 explosion

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Tel Aviv expands invasion of Gaza

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The Israeli armed forces have expanded their military operations in the Gaza Strip, sending tanks and troops into the area across the northern border July 3. An Israeli armored column entered from the south a week earlier. Tel Aviv claims the invasion is aimed at recovering an Israeli soldier who was taken prisoner in a June 25 raid inside Israel carried out

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Nat'l Guard troops in New Orleans target working-class neighborhoods

BY STEVE WARSHELL

NEW ORLEANS—On June 20 hundreds of Louisiana National Guard troops joined police in launching a massive "anti-crime" campaign here, targeting several overwhelmingly Black working-class neighborhoods.

Charging there has been an increase in homicides in the city over the past month, the mayor and the governor of Louisiana are seeking to set a precedent for further use of the military in domestic policing operations. They aim to beef up the powers of local cops and further chip away at constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure, and other civil liberties.

"Right after Katrina it was the National Guard that denied us food and water, they have never made this city safer," said Mike Howells, a member of the organization Concern, Community, and Compassion. He attended a city council meeting June 22 where residents protested the move. "They are simply here to scapegoat young Black men as criminals and as somehow responsible for the crisis we face in housing, health care, and jobs," he said.

In desert fatigues and matching Humvee personnel carriers, 300 military police from the Louisiana National Guard—all armed with rifles and side arms with live ammunition—joined nearly five times as many city and state cops here in launching the operation.

"They are not here to help us, they want people to be afraid," hotel worker Simon Gilbert told the *Militant*, in a June 24 interview downtown across from the National Guard "Command Post" at Loyola and Perdido streets. "Right now, many of us in the 9th Ward try to stay out of trouble by coming back from work and just staying home. Those guns are going to be aimed at us."

According to the *Times-Picayune*, the National Guard forces "are patrolling neighborhoods such as Gentilly, the Lower 9th Ward and eastern New Orleans, where the population is sparse." Meanwhile, city and state police are setting up a "massive physical presence" in the more heavily populated neighborhoods of Central City, Algiers, and parts of Uptown.

New Orleans police spokesman Steve Nicholas told the press that "when deployed, officers will set up a perimeter around a large neighborhood" where residents would be subject to searches and vehicle checks.

More federal cops are also being sent to New Orleans and they are pressing to try more cases under federal charges, which come with longer sentences and less chance of pre-trial release, FBI agent James Bernazzani told the local media.

"The system's weakest links today," Bernazzini told the *Houston Chronicle*, "are judges in state courts who are notoriously lenient in releasing suspects."

The facts, however, appear to contradict that assertion. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics for 2004, Louisiana led the United States with the highest incarceration rate.

The National Guard had as many as 15,000 soldiers in the city in the weeks after Katrina. The current force is expected to stay until mid-September, the *Times-Picayune* reported.

Militant/Maceo Dixon

Humvees used by National Guard troops in New Orleans

Defense planned for Mississippi abortion clinic

MIAMI—At left, anti-abortion protesters in June outside the Women's Health Organization in Jackson, Mississippi. Operation Save America, formerly Operation Rescue, has called for more protests in July to "storm the gates of hell" and shut down the clinic, the only one in the state that provides abortions.

The National Organization for Women and others that defend a woman's right to choose are preparing to counter-mobilize July 15–22 at the clinic and have sent out an appeal for volunteers to join "Reproductive Freedom Summer '06: Providing a Peaceful Presence/Jackson, Miss."

—MAGGIE TROWE

Protesters in Boston area condemn cop attack on youth of Asian descent

BY JOHN HAWKINS

QUINCY, Massachusetts—About 125 people rallied outside City Hall here June 24 to protest the April 30 beating by the police of four youths of Asian descent.

Karen Chen, Quan Manh Thin, Tat M. Yuen, and Howard Ng were on their way home from an engagement party, according to a statement by the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), which called the rally. While the four were in their car next to the Quincy Super 88 Market, a state trooper approached them. While the four were talking with the officer, a Quincy police car drove up. Without warning one of the cops reportedly got out of the car and pepper-sprayed three of them in the eyes.

In the course of the cop assault, the CPA statement said, Chen, who is just over five feet tall and a CPA organizer, was attacked by three of the cops, receiving a black eye and bruises. One of the four victims was knocked unconscious.

To add insult to injury, the four were then taken to police headquarters in handcuffs and charged with resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.

The CPA called the rally to demand that the charges against the Quincy 4, as they are now known, be dropped. It also called for compensation for lost wages and other damages, suspension without pay of the cops involved in the assault, and that the Quincy police department issue a public apology.

The protesters, the majority youth of Asian origin, held signs in Chinese and English, some of which read, "I got beaten for talking while Asian," "Our community is not your target practice," and "Talking while Asian is not illegal."

Suzanne Lee, chairperson of the

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THE MILITANT

Defend women's right to choose abortion

Supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion are defending abortion clinics from rightist attacks. The clinic in Jackson, Mississippi—the only one in the state—is being targeted for protests July 15–22 by the anti-abortion group Operation Save America (formerly Operation Rescue). The 'Militant' will cover this fight. Don't miss a single issue!

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Washington, Tokyo renew threats against n. Korea

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington and Tokyo, along with their imperialist allies in Europe, have intensified their threats against the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) after the government in Pyongyang carried out ballistic missile tests July 4–5.

Pyongyang reportedly tested several types of ballistic missiles, including the Taepodong-2, which may be developed to hit targets as far as Alaska and the U.S. West Coast.

According to the *Washington Post*, Japanese foreign minister Taro Aso announced Tokyo was considering economic sanctions on the DPRK in retaliation for the missile testing, starting with a six-month ban on north Korean ships from entering Japanese ports.

U.S. national security advisor Stephen Hadley called the tests "provocative behavior." Top officials of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the U.S.-led military alliance of 26 states based in Europe, made similar statements.

Others have used the conflict to beat the drums for war with the DPRK.

In a June 22 *Washington Post* column William Perry and Ashton Carter, the former Clinton administration secretary and assistant secretary of defense, respectively, called on Washington to attack the DPRK's missile sites. "[T]he United States should immediately make clear its intention to strike and destroy the North Korean Taepodong missile before it can be launched," they wrote. "This could be accomplished, for example, by a cruise missile launched from a submarine carrying a high-explosive warhead."

The following day Bush administration officials rejected the proposal. "If you're going to launch strikes at another nation, you'd better be prepared to not just fire one shot," Vice President Richard Cheney said on CNN.

Tokyo and Washington have used the missile tests in north korea as a pretext to deepen their military cooperation in the region.

In May, Washington agreed to install an advanced radar system and the latest version of its Patriot missile system. According to the Associated Press, Japan's Defense Agency announced that in light of the Korean missile tests these steps will now be expedited.

Last October, top defense and foreign affairs officials of the two states released a document after a joint meeting, titled "U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future."

That document and a second one released in May outline sweeping changes in Washington's and Tokyo's military forces in Japan and the region.

These include the transfer by 2014 of the headquarters of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force—8,000 Marines and their 9,000 dependents—from Okinawa, where the U.S. base is extremely unpopular among the Japanese, to a base in Guam, a U.S. colony.

At the same time, the documents outline steps for further shared use of facilities between the military forces of the two governments in Japan.

The Japanese military established a new "joint operation system," which will allow it "to respond more swiftly and effectively" through "unified operations by the Ground, Maritime and Air SDF [Self Defense Forces]," Joint Staff Office chief of staff Hajime Massaki wrote in the March 2006 edition of *Japan Defense Focus*. The changes, which parallel moves being made by the Pentagon in its "transformation" of the U.S. military, will improve the "smooth conduct of bilateral actions with the U.S. military," Massaki said.

While objecting vociferously to the DPRK's missile tests, Washington, working with the governments of Japan and other allies, has staged large-scale war games in the region recently. In June, U.S. forces conducted the largest such operation in that region since the Vietnam War, involving three aircraft carriers, 22,000 troops, and 280 warplanes off Guam.

On June 25 Washington initiated the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises off Hawaii, involving the U.S. Navy working with those of Australia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, Chile, Peru, and south Korea. The exercise includes missile-firing tests and antisubmarine warfare.

'Canada Day Is Humiliation Day' say Chinese-Canadian protesters and supporters

Militant/Steve Penner

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—The BC Coalition of Head Tax Payers, Spouses, and Descendants organized a march of more than 200 in Chinatown here July 1—Canada Day—demanding the federal government pay compensation to all the families of those who paid the head tax (see photo above). Similar marches took place in Calgary, Edmonton, and Montreal.

Ottawa imposed the racist head tax on all Chinese immigrants between 1885 and 1923.

On June 23, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for the tax but refused to give more than "symbolic payments" of $20,000 to the 35 surviving head tax payers and 360 surviving widows.

The head tax was initially set at $50 for each family member. The government then increased it to $100 per head and in 1903 to $500. At that time the amount was equivalent to two years' wages. Many were forced to leave family members behind, hoping to raise the money in the future.

On July 1, 1923, the federal government replaced the head tax with the Chinese Exclusion Act, which effectively banned all Chinese immigration until it was repealed in 1947.

Chinese-Canadians have fought for more than 20 years for an official apology and the repayment of the $23 million (the equivalent of $1.2 billion today) to all those who paid the head tax, their spouses, or surviving family members.

Sid Chan, one of the organizers of the march here, said the token payment was a "slap in the face to the people who have passed away" over the years while the government turned a deaf ear to their demands. Harvey Lee, a spokesman for the BC Coalition, said many Chinese-Canadian families "lived in poverty for years," while paying off crushing debts to meet the head tax requirement.

Marchers carried signs demanding "Justice in Our Time," and proclaiming "It's Still Humiliation Day." Until the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed, Chinese-Canadians called Canada Day "Humiliation Day." Protesters also carried a banner proclaiming, "No one is illegal," one of the slogans of marchers for immigrant rights in the United States.

—STEVE PENNER

Israeli army expands attacks in Gaza

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by the military wing of Hamas, the governing party of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and two other armed Palestinian groups.

The Israeli assault has received Washington's support.

The attacks so far have focused on key civilian infrastructure in the densely populated area, home to 1.3 million Palestinians. Israeli air strikes destroyed the only power plant in the territory, and Tel Aviv cut off the only fuel pipeline into Gaza. About half of the residents are without electricity. The majority of Gaza's water wells rely on electrical pumps.

According to a United Nations report, Israeli air force jets have been flying at supersonic speeds low over Gaza City at around 4 a.m. daily since the assault began, setting off sonic booms that break windows and terrorize the population. Three key bridges linking northern and southern Gaza have been destroyed by aerial bombing and all roads, border outposts, and ports have been sealed.

Tel Aviv has used the capture of its soldier to put pressure on Hamas to recognize Israel. After elections in January, Hamas replaced Fatah—the party led by the late Yasir Arafat that ran the PNA since it was established in 1994—as the ruling force in the PNA.

Since the invasion was launched June 27, Israeli forces have arrested 60 members of Hamas. The air force has bombed the Interior Ministry building and the offices of PNA prime minister Ismail Haniyeh, who is also a leader of Hamas, as well as the offices of Fatah in Gaza. Four other Hamas officials were evicted from their homes in East Jerusalem, including Khaled Abu Arafa, the PNA's minister of Jerusalem Affairs.

The White House has issued a statement demanding the release of the captured Israeli soldier, tacitly endorsing the Israeli military assault. "The initial goal should be freeing the Israeli soldier. That is key to ending the crisis," U.S. president George Bush told the prime minister of Turkey in a telephone message July 1, according to U.S. National Security Council spokesman Frederick Jones, quoted in the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

"We do not recognize the Hamas government," said White House spokesman Tony Snow two days later. While citing U.S. and Israeli government "concern" for the conditions faced by the Palestinian population, he said, "it is the responsibility of Hamas to return the Israeli soldier. That's how it all got started."

European Union president Matti Vanhanen, Finland's prime minister, also called for the immediate release of the Israeli soldier. Vanhanen added that the Israeli military operation should be halted and the arrested PNA officials freed.

The forces holding the soldier have reportedly set as a condition for his release that Tel Aviv free 1,000 of the 8,000 Palestinians estimated to be held in Israeli jails.

"I would like to tell the whole world to focus on our 8,000 prisoners and not just this one," Ashraf al-Moghaari, 31, an employee of the Palestinian parliament, told the *Washington Post*.

The invasion of Palestinian territory came after a month in which Israeli attacks in Gaza had increased substantially.

According to a UN report, in the month of June alone the Israeli Air Force assassinated at least 10 Palestinians whom Tel Aviv accused of armed attacks on Israeli targets. A total of 43 Palestinians, the majority of them bystanders, were killed in these attacks, compared to two Israeli soldiers killed in the June 25 raid in which the soldier was taken prisoner.

While more than 200 homemade rockets were fired by Palestinians at targets in Israel in June prior to the invasion, nearly 650 artillery salvos and 33 air strikes were conducted by the Israeli military against Palestinian targets in Gaza during the same period. That does not include some 1,500 artillery rounds fired into Gaza since the beginning of the current invasion.

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Families of miners killed underground in Kentucky demand access to inquiry

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Relatives and legal representatives of miners killed in a May 20 blast at the Kentucky Darby No. 1 Mine in Harlan County, Kentucky, are speaking out against a decision by state officials to continue to exclude them from their inquiry of the disaster.

In a separate probe of the explosion, investigators of the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) declined to question one of the agency's inspectors as to *who* had ordered the cutting with a torch of metal roof support straps that intersected with a sealed-off section of the mine—and *why.*

The blast ripped through the mine in Holmes Mill. According to the county coroner, foreman Amon Brock and miner Jimmy Lee were killed by the explosion. Miners Roy Middleton, George Petra, and Paris Thomas Jr. survived the blast but were trapped underground and suffocated from carbon monoxide.

"Everything needs to be out in the open," Millie Middleton told the *Militant* in a July 1 phone interview, regarding the decision by state authorities for a second time to exclude the deceased miners' relatives, or their representatives, from the state hearings. Millie is Roy Middleton's mother.

In announcing this decision, Chuck Wolfe, spokesman for the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety, said he wants "as sterile an environment as possible" to encourage witnesses "to be totally candid," reported the *Harlan Daily Enterprise.*

The deceased miners' families counter that the company is represented at the hearings. Relatives of these miners and their supporters picketed the state and federal hearings in June to protest the exclusion. United Mine Workers of America safety official Kenny Johnson and attorney Tony Oppegard, who represent these families, were allowed to attend the federal investigation and ask questions as a result of the protest and the decision of several miners to designate the two as their representatives.

In a departure from earlier procedure, MSHA investigator Richard Herndon announced that Oppegard and Johnson would be limited to written questions of Stanley Sturgill at a June 27 session. Sturgill, an MSHA inspector, was in the Darby No. 1 Mine May 15–17, days before the blast. Oppegard told the *Louisville Courier-Journal* that in interviews of 28 previous witnesses he had been allowed to ask both verbal and written questions.

Oppegard said only three or four of the 16 questions he submitted for Sturgill on June 27 were asked. Those that MSHA withheld, according to Oppegard, concerned why the miners were cutting the metal roof support straps, such as: did MSHA tell the mine owners to remove the straps; does the intersection of the straps with the seal violate MSHA policy?

Oppegard and Johnson have said the blast was likely caused when a torch miners were using to cut these straps ignited methane gas leaking from a seal built with substandard material.

"One can only assume that MSHA doesn't want the inspector to be questioned about the main issue in this case," Oppegard said.

Protesters in Miami: FBI framed 'Liberty City 7'

AP/Wilfredo Lee

MIAMI—Relatives of the "Liberty City Seven" joined a June 29 press conference in Liberty City—a center of the Black community here—to protest their arrest by the FBI a week earlier as a blatant frame up. The government has charged the seven with plotting a "terrorist conspiracy" to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago and the FBI offices in Miami. The case is based on testimony of an FBI informer who reportedly entrapped the men by posing as a representative of al-Qaeda. As of July 5, all seven have been denied bail.

Sarah Ruth Robinett, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Florida House of Representatives, District 109, which encompasses Liberty City, is campaigning there. "We join with those who protest the FBI raid and arrests in Liberty City," she told the *Militant*. "This frame up, based on 'evidence' cooked up by one FBI snitch, shows how similar operations will be used against workers fighting to organize and use our unions, protesting police brutality, or opposing Washington's war policies. These are the ultimate targets of Washington's so-called war on terror."

—DEBORAH LIATOS

Miner who survived Sago: 'We expected to be rescued'

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safety officials investigating the blast. After a Freedom of Information Act request by the Associated Press, the West Virginia office of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) posted its interview with McCloy on its web site on June 28.

Eleven workers and a foreman perished in the Sago explosion, one dying from the blast itself and 11 succumbing to carbon monoxide poisoning after being trapped from the explosion underground and while waiting for rescue crews. The toll was the highest at a single mine in the state in nearly 40 years.

McCloy said that when the workers heard the explosion they were quickly enveloped in smoke and gas. They tried to exit on a mantrip, the vehicle that takes them in and out of the mine, but they soon found the vehicle's path was blocked.

When the miners put on their self-rescuers, four of them found the devices that are supposed to provide them with oxygen in case of emergency did not work, McCloy said. He described his efforts to make the self-rescuer of fellow roof bolter Jerry Groves function. "You put air into it, you moved it, but there was nothing going on with it," McCloy testified. "That's what told me right there it was broken.

"I fought with it for I don't know how long, trying to mess with that valve, blow air through it, or anything I could do, but nothing would work," McCloy said.

Finally, the men built a makeshift barricade against the poisonous gases and smoke with plastic sheeting, the only material they could find, and shared air from the remaining self-rescuers. As they had been trained, they began beating on roof bolts with a sledgehammer, hoping to draw attention on the surface.

"I figured they'd bring that machine down and would have found us, would have drilled the hole in the right spot and would have taken us out of there," McCloy said. "That's what I expected. I expected to hear shots fire on the roof ... and didn't hear anything.

"We banged and banged and banged, everyone did. We had a discussion about that, about how long it was going to take," the miner testified.

"We thought that we were going to get rescued," McCloy said. "And as time went on, it didn't look good."

What the men didn't know is that the Sago mine owners, the International Coal Group (ICG), waited two hours after the explosion before even reporting it to MSHA. It was 11 hours later that the first rescue teams entered the mine to search for the workers. They found the men 42 hours after the explosion.

McCloy was referring to seismographic equipment at the mine to detect the bangs on roof bolts. Such machinery had been used successfully in 2002 at the Queecreek mine in Pennsylvania to pinpoint the location of coal miners trapped underground after a flood. Rescuers then drilled a hole at that spot and pulled all the trapped miners on the surface. Neither the company nor the government safety officials made any attempt to get any such equipment at Sago.

During a public hearing in May on the disaster, MSHA district manager Kevin Stricklin said the agency's seismic equipment was not needed because rescuers knew roughly where the miners were. He said it would have taken eight hours to get the machinery and set it up.

"But we know from the notes left by the men that they were alive at 4:45 p.m.," shot back Pam Campbell, sister-in-law of Marty Bennett, one of the miners who died. That was more than 10 hours after the explosion, she noted.

"You failed these men," said Bennett's son, Russell. "They are trained to strike on the roof bolts and to listen for shots, but no one was listening."

Several families requested that the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) represent them in the investigation that followed the disaster. ICG fought the request. The company tried to ban UMWA representatives from mine property and exclude them from the underground investigation. Under pressure of the relatives of the deceased miners, MSHA obtained a court injunction protecting the right of these families to select the representative of their choice. A federal appeals court upheld that injunction on June 28. The case remains open.

Originally scheduled for release July 1, the official government report on the Sago disaster has now been postponed until July 19.

Meanwhile, in Harlan County, Kentucky, questions continue in the investigation of the Darby No. 1 mine explosion where five men died May 20 (see article on this page). That disaster brought to 33 the number of U.S. coal miners killed in the first half of this year, compared to 22 who died in all of last year.

Correction

The article in last week's issue, "Bipartisan support grows for Iraq war," incorrectly said that Carl Levin is a senator from Wisconsin. He is a senator from Michigan.

'Militant' sales brisk in Harlan County

Continued from front page

at Darby No. 1 Mine (see article above) bought extra copies of the *Militant* and took several subscription envelopes to sign up other people she knows. A continuous mine machine operator who worked at that mine also bought a subscription at the crossing.

Many workers remembered the paper from two previous sales teams in May and June. Some expressed appreciation for the paper's factual coverage of the blast and the actions since then by relatives of the deceased miners demanding justice.

Ryan Curtis, a conductor for CSX railroad, was among 10 other workers who subscribed at the parking lot of a local shopping mall. "This will start to happen in other work places if the unions don't stand up," he said.

"We need a strong union," said Donald Massey, a former coal miner who now works in a nonunion garment shop.

Sam Manuel contributed to this article.

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Militant supporters across the United States and other countries are organizing similar outreach efforts in July and August, which will be capped off with a subscription renewal campaign at the end of the summer. Please join in. Order a bundle, if you don't already receive one, and ask relatives, neighbors, friends, co-workers, fellow students, or other acquaintances to subscribe. This is a good time too to begin reaching out to new readers whose subs are about to expire and ask them to renew. To find out how, contact the *Militant* directly (see box on page 2) or our distributors nearest you (see directory on page 8).

—Argiris Malapanis, Editor

—ON THE PICKET LINE

Boston: pickets protest firing of health care workers

BOSTON—Thirty people picketed in front of Children's Hospital here June 19 to protest the firing a month earlier of three health-care workers—Ana LaMarche, Nicolasa Lopez, and Dr. Ana Ortiz. A leaflet put out by their supporters charges the hospital owners with firing the workers as retaliation for "asserting their rights, expressing patients' and colleagues' concerns and for trying to organize a union." LaMarche, Lopez, and Ortiz have been involved in the fight for immigrant rights and against unjust working conditions. They have also filed charges challenging their dismissal with the National Labor Relations Board.

—Ted Leonard

New York: union wins back job of fired meat packer

BRONX, New York—For the second time this year workers' solidarity succeeded in winning back a job for a co-worker dismissed at Garden Manor Farms, a meat processing plant here. Alfred "Flaco" Chevere was fired the week of June 5 for "absenteeism and tardiness." The company is part of the Hunts Point Meat Market. Many co-workers were upset and encouraged Chevere to fight the firing through the union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 342. Union representatives, Chevere, and company representatives met on June 13. After the meeting, Robert Roman, the shop steward, announced to workers, "Flaco will be back on Monday."

Earlier this year the union also succeeded in winning Kevin Carr's job back after the company fired him for "insubordination." Roman said, "All the hard times we had on strike to win the union a few years ago is paying off."

—Dan Fein

Pennsylvania: locked-out workers fight attacks on health care

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—The Truth Hardware manufacturing plant here locked out the 109 members of Local 90 of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers Union on June 5. The company, a subsidiary of the British conglomerate FKI, is demanding workers pay a big share of their health-care costs.

Karen Salazer, financial secretary of Local 90, told the *Militant* that since their contract expired in March they had been working under the old agreement. The majority of the workers rejected two takeback offers from the bosses. Then the company, which makes window locks and assemblies, refused further negotiations and locked them out. Truth Hardware then bused in 35 scabs from a nonunion plant in Minnesota. The scabs left after two and a half weeks, and the plant is now being run by managers and office personnel, Salazer said. The workers have been receiving solidarity from area unions.

—John Studer

Hilmar Bragi/www.vf.is
Workers picket airport in Iceland June 25

Iceland: Airport workers conduct three-hour walkout

KEFLAVÍK, Iceland—Defying company threats of firings and damage claims, several hundred workers at IGS Ground Services at the international airport here walked off the job June 25 between 5:00 and 8:00 a.m. Workers point to low wages, heavy workloads, long hours, and poor safety conditions as the reasons for the action.

A prominent demand of the unionists is to end a new shift system called "Time Care." Workers are sent home for four to six hours and then have to return to finish their shift. Fifteen-hour shifts are not uncommon. Further job actions are planned unless workers' demands are met. If the company fires anyone, "we will all stand by our co-worker," said ramp worker Gints Liepins.

—Ögmundur Jónsson

Mayor in Pennsylvania city promotes anti-immigrant measures

BY JOHN STUDER

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—Louis Barletta, the mayor of this northeast Pennsylvania town of 30,000, has catapulted himself into the national debate in bourgeois politics over immigration policy. In June, the mayor published an "Open Letter" and introduced a series of anti-immigrant measures before the city council here.

"We want to make this the toughest city in the country for illegal aliens," Barletta said, attempting to scapegoat undocumented workers as the cause of economic problems facing native-born workers.

The mayor's proposed "Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance," states, "Illegal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospital to fiscal hardship and legal residents to substandard quality of care, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life."

The measure would deny a license to do business in the city to any company that "aids and abets" undocumented immigrant workers, including by hiring them. It also makes it illegal for landlords to rent to a worker without proper papers. It declares English to be the official language of Hazleton and bars the use of Spanish on any city forms or documents.

Barletta has been featured on dozens of interviews across the country, including FOX News, CNN, and ABC radio.

A bipartisan group of five state representatives brought Barletta to join them in a press conference in Harrisburg, the state capital, on June 20 to announce the filing of a set of bills to deepen the attacks on undocumented workers. The legislators have dubbed their collections of bills "National Security Begins at Home."

The population of Hazleton, once an anthracite coalmining center, was projected by the U.S. Census in 2000 to decline. Then a series of industrial parks opened and the area attracted new industry, including a number of meatpacking companies, the largest of which is an Excel packing plant. Thousands of immigrants, many originally from the Dominican Republic, moved to the area in search of work. City officials estimate that the population of Hazleton is now 30 percent immigrant workers.

"The Latino community feels very offended and betrayed," Anna Arias, president of the Hazleton Area Latino Association, told the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker.*

A number of young people gathered June 25 at the Sandwiches Cibaeña take-out shop on Wyoming Avenue, the center of the city's Latino community. They said they were organizing to attend and speak out at the next city council meeting on July 13. The council must approve Barletta's proposals at three successive meetings to become law.

"We need to organize some protests now," José Lechuga, who runs a grocery store and restaurant on Wyoming, told the *Militant*. He has hung two large Mexican flags outside his stores. Lechuga mentioned that there were no organized actions in Hazleton as part of the nationwide wave of demonstrations April 10 and May 1.

"What would Barletta do if he was mayor in Miami or another big city?" asked Jasmin Espinal, a bodega manager on Wyoming. "He'd have to put up with us or move. We ain't going nowhere."

"I'm proud to speak Spanish and I'll die speaking it," said Hazleton resident Armando Rodríguez.

City officials admit that many of the proposed measures in the ordinance are unenforceable. Barring the use of Spanish in city forms, for example, is illegal.

"The real goal of the anti-immigrant drive is not to drive undocumented workers out of the area or the country, but instead to force them into an underground, semi-legal status that opens the door for superexploitation and attacks against unionization," Martin Santiago, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in Philadelphia's 2nd CD, told the media.

"This campaign flies in the face of the massive actions that took place in April and May," Santiago said, "which inspired undocumented and native-born workers alike."

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THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

July 17, 1981

MANAGUA—A series of terrorist raids by armed counterrevolutionaries has left sixteen Nicaraguans dead in less than two weeks.

The most serious incident came in the early morning hours of June 23, when a gang of thirty Somozaists crossed the Honduran border and killed seven people in the township of Panamá, thirty kilometers from the northern Nicaraguan city of Somoto.

In a June 23 speech paying homage to the seven dead in the Panamá attack, Commander Humberto Ortega, minister of defense, announced that new laws against counterrevolutionary maneuvers were under consideration.

Ortega said that the decapitalization of enterprises should also be viewed as counterrevolutionary action. He declared that the government would have to find the arms necessary for the people to defend the revolution.

July 16, 1956

More than 100,000 Japanese jammed a downtown Tokyo park on July 4 in a five-hour demonstration against violation of Japan's independence by U.S. imperialism. While the crowd listened to speeches denouncing U.S. retention of military bases on Okinawa, a U.S. heavy cruiser in the harbor boomed a 21-gun "salute to independence day."

The demonstration was part of a mounting wave of popular protests which began about three weeks ago with the leaking in Washington of the Price report. Supposedly designed to "rectify some injustices attending United States Army rental of land in Okinawa used for military bases," the report actually supports measures making the military occupation of Japanese territory officially permanent. The anti-U.S. feeling is so strong in Japan now that even the conservative capitalist politicians are forced to make speeches denouncing U.S. occupation of Okinawa.

July 18, 1931

The latest reports arriving from Germany indicate that the adoption of the Hoover plan has not achieved the task it proclaimed for itself. The internal situation, instead of being relieved has been greatly aggravated. The delay brought about by the negotiations between the Americans and the French has called forth an unprecedented flight of capital from Germany, nearly $500,000,000 leaving the country within the period of the last ten weeks. The collapse of the Danat Bank, the financial institution most intimately bound up with the rise of German imperialism and the subsequent bank holiday have brought in their wake something resembling a little earthquake in central European finances. The mark is not being quoted at all on several exchanges. In Belgium, Hungary and other European countries, especially in Central Europe where national banks are also crashing, German currency is not accepted for payment.

How Chinese, Japanese immigrants resisted discrimination in U.S.

The following is based on a talk presented by Milton Chee, a rail worker in San Francisco and member of Pathfinder's Printing Project, at an April 22 meeting in New York to discuss and promote the book Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press in January (see ad below).* *Copyright © 2006 by the* Militant.

BY MILTON CHEE

The fight by working people for immigrant rights today has led to renewed interest in the decades of discriminatory treatment faced by Chinese and Japanese laborers when they first came to the United States more than 100 years ago.

The first wave of Chinese to arrive here came in response to the California Gold Rush in the mid-1850s. Emigration from China in this period was organized as a replacement for the banned African slave trade. Facing displacement and unemployment at home, Chinese migrated to places as close as Singapore and Australia, and as far away as the United States, Cuba, and Peru. They faced horrendous conditions on the ships they sailed in, which were as hideous as the death ships of the slave trade.

Upon arrival, these Chinese laborers faced racial and even deadly discrimination in the gold fields. Amongst the many anti-Chinese laws to be passed was the Foreign Miners' Tax. It gave the tax collector indiscriminate power to collect and re-collect the tax despite claims from miners born abroad that they had already paid up. Local ordinances, state laws, and court rulings were capped by the passage of the anti-Chinese act barring immigration by Chinese workers in 1882. This law, known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, remained in effect until 1943.

Among the many instances of discrimination, one that stands out to me is the case tried in 1854*, People vs. Hall*, of a California white man accused of murder in which the prosecution's star witness was a Chinese. The murderer appealed his conviction based on the California statute that Blacks and Indians could not testify against a Caucasian. Hall's defense extended this to cover all non-whites, arguing that the Chinese witness had no standing to testify against him. The California Supreme Court agreed and overturned the conviction. This became the legal basis of the saying, "You haven't got a Chinaman's chance."

Anti-Chinese pogroms

Anti-Chinese pogroms would sweep the West whenever we were seen as a threat in the job market, especially at times of economic depression and during elections. An important part of this movement was the California Workingmen's Party, whose single platform plank was "The Chinese must go." In July 1877 a three-day riot broke out in San Francisco in which a number of Chinese died and much property was destroyed.

Much is made of the cultural and racial differences setting Chinese apart from the rest of U.S. society, but in the end it was the economic needs of capital that drove down the wages and standard of living of all workers.

Chinese workers with experience in explosives and construction were used to lay the roadbed and rails of the Central Pacific Railroad from Sacramento eastward through the Sierra Nevada mountains and Utah, including during the dead of two winters. The agricultural skills and know-how of these workers were also used to drain the swamplands and carve out the winery caves.

After the Union Pacific Railroad was completed, Chinese rail builders were employed throughout the Pacific Northwest and other places in the United States to build railroads.

After the completion of these railroads, many moved back to San Francisco and other major cities with Chinese communities where they sought jobs in restaurants, laundries, and other small businesses. Or they went into fields as farm laborers. Some went to Cuba to fill the demand for sugar plantation labor.

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, city authorities planned to rebuild by relocating Chinatown since it occupied highly valued real estate. The Chinese community quickly reoccupied its original area, forestalling the takeover attempt.

One positive outcome of the earthquake was the destruction of civil records, making it impossible to prove who was a citizen and who was not.

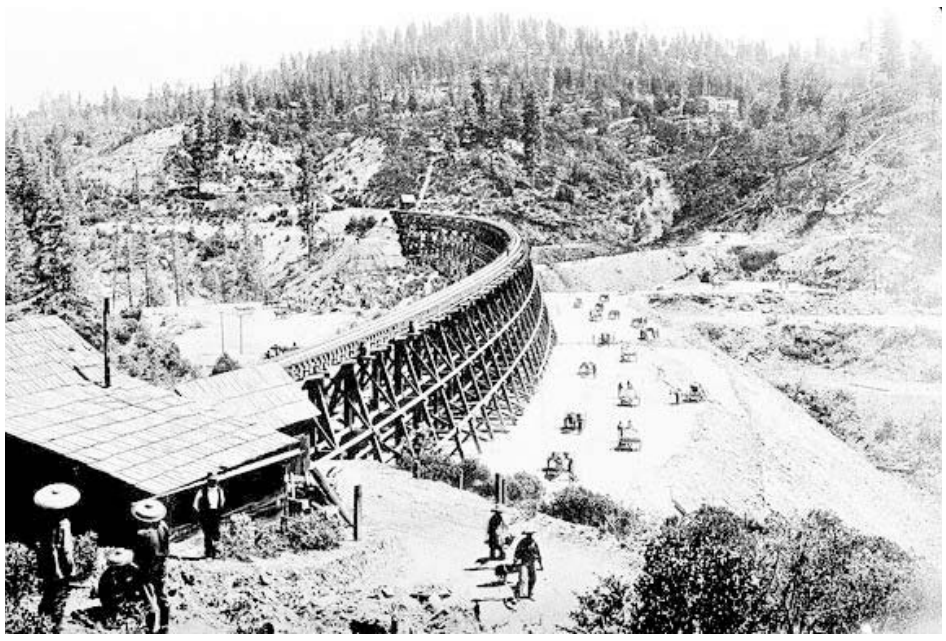
These fights by Chinese workers and small businessmen are little noted in U.S. history books, resulting in the false image of a docile, restrained community.

Discrimination against Japanese

Similar forms of racial oppression and economic exploitation were used against other Asian immigrants.

Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States in large numbers between 1890 and 1915, seeking employment first in the fields and service jobs, and later spreading into specialized farming and other small businesses.

Leading up to World War II, Japanese immigrants had become successful in truck and chicken farming, with a few even becoming millionaires. However, like the Chinese, Japanese were outlawed from inter-marrying with Caucasians, in line with the existing miscegenation laws of the time.



Chinese workers in 1877 filling in base of trestle along Sierra Nevada mountains near Sacramento, California, using pick, shovel, wheelbarrow, and one-horse carts.

In 1913, the state of California passed the Alien Land Law preventing land ownership by non-natives.

Resistance to anti-Asian discrimination included strikes by Japanese plantation workers in 1909 in Hawaii. Japanese workers also joined 3,000 Filipino workers on strike there in 1920, involving 8,300 workers, or 77 percent of the workforce.

With the outbreak of World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 banning Japanese and Japanese-Americans from the West Coast states, supposedly to keep that portion of the population from being agents of Tokyo during wartime. Most of them were U.S. citizens, a large portion children, because a majority were born in the United States. The infamous concentration camps for Japanese-Americans were the result of Roosevelt's order.

After the war not one case of treason or espionage was ever brought up. A major impact of the removal of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast was the loss of their lucrative farm holdings and businesses. These were sold off for fractions of their value, and were absorbed into the holdings of California's capitalist class.

The ability and spirit to fight against racist oppression and exploitation—which the previous generations of Chinese and other Asian immigrants showed—is manifest even more today in the proletarian demonstrations for immigrants rights and recognition.

Reaching out for solidarity, getting it, and demanding more—including through political strikes demanding from the government legalization for all immigrants—shows the way forward for all working people.

It is this road—not that of the California Workingmen's Party, which sought racist exclusion and ultimately relied on bourgeois politics—that can lead to the ending of national oppression and class exploitation of all workers and farmers.

Cuba's socialist revolution

In the book *Our History Is Still Being Written,* Sio Wong, one of the Chinese-Cuban generals, states, "What's the difference in the experience of Chinese in Cuba and other countries of the diaspora? The difference is that here a socialist revolution took place. The revolution eliminated discrimination based on the color of a person's skin. Above all, it eliminated the property relations that create not only economic but also social inequality between rich and poor.

"That's what made it possible for the son of Chinese immigrants to become a government representative, or anything else. Here discrimination—against blacks, against Chinese, against women, against the poor—was ended. Cubans of Chinese descent are integrated.

"To historians and others who want to study the question, I say that you have to understand that the Chinese community here in Cuba is different from Peru, Brazil, Argentina, or Canada.

"And that difference is the triumph of a socialist revolution."

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Supreme Court ruling

Continued from front page
July 4 recess.

Minority leader Harry Reid said he wants to work with the White House on crafting such a bill.

In the 5-3 decision, *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the court said the military commissions, as structured by the administration, lack legislative authorization and violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and the Geneva Conventions.

The Supreme Court decision came on appeal by Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a Yemeni who was captured during the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. Hamdan is alleged to have been a driver and bodyguard for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. In June 2002 Hamdan was transported to the Guantánamo prison camp. A year later the Bush administration designated Hamdan for trial by a military commission. Later he was charged with one count of "conspiracy" for "terrorism." The U.S. government is seeking military trials against 14 of some 490 individuals being held at Guantánamo Bay. Most have been locked up for more than four years without charges.

A week after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Congress passed a resolution declaring that the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those "nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided" the attacks.

The Authorization for Use of Military Force, as it is known, gave the president "specific statutory authorization" to act along these lines on the basis of the War Powers Resolution. The Bush administration has argued that this included the power to convene military tribunals.

The Supreme Court ruled that while the 2001 Congressional resolution "activated the President's war powers," procedures for trying Hamdan and other Guantánamo prisoners already exist in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It stated that the president could proceed with military commissions if it either asked Congress for specific authorization to do so or followed the rules of regular military courts-martial.

The court ruled that the proposed military trials would violate international law by barring defendants from the proceedings and from learning what evidence was presented against them.

Administration to seek legislation

Asked about the ruling during a June 29 press conference with Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, Bush said the ruling did not mean he had to release anyone from Guantánamo. The high court decision, he said, provides "a way forward with military tribunals" through working with Congress.

At the Justice Department's briefing, senior administration officials said the court decision "emphasized that these problems can be cured and invited the president and Congress to do just that."

In his concurring opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote, "Nothing prevents the president from returning to Congress to seek the authority he believes necessary."

Arlen Specter, a Republican and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, introduced a bill to do just that and said his committee would hold a hearing on it July 11.

Praise of ruling by liberals

Applauding the ruling, the *New York Times* editors said June 30, "Rather than continue having his policies struck down, President Bush should find a way to prosecute the war on terror within the bounds of the law." A *Times* news article said the ruling was "a historic event, a defining moment."

"Today's decision is a victory for the rule of law in the United States," said Anthony Romero, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"It doesn't get any better" Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, said of the ruling. The center represents hundreds of those jailed at Guantánamo.

Different praise by conservatives

A June 30 *Wall Street Journal* oped column by David Rivkin and Lee Casey, lawyers who served in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr., noted that the court agreed that military commissions "can, in appropriate circumstances, be used to try and punish individuals captured in the war on terror."

They said the judges did not question the government's authority to jail Hamdan, "or other Guantánamo prisoners, while hostilities continue. Nor did any of them suggest that Mr. Hamdan, or any other Guantánamo detainee, must be treated as civilians and accorded a speedy trial in the civilian courts." The ruling, they concluded, "vindicates the basic legal architecture relied upon by the administration in prosecuting this war."

New York: Protesters demand release of Puerto Rican patriot Antonio Camacho

Militant/Marshall Lambie

NEW YORK—Dozens protested at the Federal Building here June 29 demanding the release of Puerto Rican political prisoner Antonio Camacho Negrón. Although he already spent 15 years in U.S. prisons for his actions in support of independence for Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule, the FBI re-arrested him March 28 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Camacho was transferred from the federal prison in San Juan to Atlanta, and is now locked up in Philadelphia. His defenders report he is in the "hole" and is being denied visits and needed medication. Protest letters should be sent to the Federal Detention Center, 700 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106; fax: (215) 521-7220; e-mail: phl/execassistant@bop.gov, or call (215) 521-4000.

—OLGA RODRIGUEZ

Socialists Workers launch Minnesota campaign

Continued from front page
working people worldwide to fight for the interests of workers, farmers, and other exploited producers. We need this unity to advance struggles by workers to organize unions and use union power to effectively resist the bosses' attacks on wages, working conditions, dignity, and safety on the job."

SWP campaign supporters "got a positive response today to what we were campaigning for from a mix of people, of different ages, occupations, and origins," Williamson said.

"We are the only candidates in Minnesota calling for withdrawing U.S. and all other occupation troops from Iraq and Afghanistan now, without any conditions," she added. "We are the only candidates saying U.S. hands off Venezuela and Cuba and opposing Washington's sanctions and threats of military action against Iran and north Korea."

Williamson's opponents include Republican Mark Kennedy, currently a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in Minnesota's 6th Congressional District (C.D.); Amy Klobucher, the Hennepin County prosecutor, of the DFL; Robert Fitzgerald of the Independence Party, which was founded by supporters of millionaire Ross Perot in the 1990s (renamed the Reform Party for a period, it elected Jesse Ventura as Minnesota governor in 1998); and Michael Cavlan, a registered nurse, with the Greens.

The SWP ticket includes Brian Taylor, 33, also a meat packer, for governor. Taylor has been a leader in the coalition in the Twin Cities that has organized marches to demand legalization for all immigrants. Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign have set a goal of gathering 4,600 signatures by July 18 to place the two candidates on the ballot in Minnesota.

The Socialist Workers ticket also includes Nelson Gonzalez, 56, for Lt. Governor; Julian Santana, 25, and a member of the Young Socialists, for U.S. Congress in the 5th C.D., based in Minneapolis; and Tom Fiske, 62, for U.S. Congress in the 4th C.D., based in St. Paul.

Tom Fiske contributed to this article.

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Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign in New York begin petitioning July 11, aiming to collect 30,000 signatures—double the state requirement—in two weeks to put the SWP ticket on the ballot in that state for the November elections (for the socialist ticket in New York see list below of SWP candidates across the United States who have been announced so far). Those who would like to help can contact the SWP campaign headquarters in Manhattan at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; Tel: (212) 736-2540.

Militant/Arrin Hawkins

Militant/Dan Fein

Maura DeLuca (left) and Róger Calero, Socialist Workers candidates for governor and U.S. Senator, respectively, in New York.

Socialist Workers Party candidates in 2006

Florida	Bernie Senter, U.S. Senate Omari Musa, Governor Margaret Trowe, U.S. Cong. 18th CD Eric Simpson, U.S. Cong., 17th CD Ruth Robinett, Fl. State Rep. D. 109
Minnesota	Rebecca Williamson, U.S. Senate Brian Taylor, Governor Nelson Gonzalez, Lt. Governor Tom Fiske, U.S. Congr. 4th CD Julian Santana, U.S. Cong. 5th CD
New Jersey	Angela Lariscy, U.S. Senate* Brian Williams, U.S. Cong. 13th CD*
New York	Róger Calero, U.S. Senate Maura DeLuca, Governor Ben O'Shaughnessy, Lt. Governor Martín Koppel, Attorney General Willie Cotton, State Comptroller Nancy Boyasko, U.S. Cong. 11th CD
Texas	Amanda Ulman, U.S. Senate José Aravena, Governor Anthony Dutrow, U.S. Cong. 18th CD
Washington	David Rosenfeld, U.S. Senate Connie Allen, U.S. Cong. 7th CD

*Confirmed on ballot

Fascism grows out of capitalist system in crisis

Below is an excerpt from Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium. *The French- and English-language editions of this book are part of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in July. This book contains a series of talks by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, covering the vast changes in world politics at the turn of the century. The excerpt below is taken from the talk "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," presented April 10, 1993, in a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the following day to a similar gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. It describes the rise of incipient fascist movements in the United States, including one led by ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan, and outlines a working-class course to fight them. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

As with other tribunes of incipient fascist movements in this century, [Patrick] Buchanan does not begin by taking on the working class directly. He begins by targeting other bourgeois politicians in both parties—those part of, or soft on, the "establishment elite"—both liberals and conservatives. He goes after the dominant ruling circles in the bourgeois parties, accusing them of letting down America; tolerating corruption in the hallways of power while failing to maintain law and order on Main Street; and living privileged lives while more and more "ordinary American working people" are pushed to the wall. He presents himself as the voice of those working men and women—"the folk."

Buchanan aggressively defines who "Americans" are—and (more venomously) who they are *not*. This is the aim of his obscene anti-immigrant demagogy. This is the content of his calculated and thinly veiled anti-Semitic forays, aimed especially against Jews on Wall Street or in top government posts. Buchanan is a master of the politics of resentment and the coarsening of civil discourse, often with a smile.

The polarization in the "culture war" declared by Buchanan and other ultrarightists takes many forms: chauvinist anti-foreigner agitation, racist assaults on affirmative action, vulgar attacks on women's social equality, half-hidden but virulent outbursts of Jew-hatred, fearful prejudices against homosexuals. These incipient fascist forces are vocal advocates of the cops, like those currently on trial in Los Angeles for brutally beating Rodney King; fascist movements always draw many of their cadres from the cops. There will be no limit to the pornographic overtones of their demagogy, as they claim to offer a road to bring a "decadent" society out of its crisis.

These reactionary positions have no logical evolution or rational content. They are a collection and recombination of refuse from the past, floating out from the backwaters of class history….

As the capitalist social crisis deepens, and the working class and labor movement begin to engage in battles to defend our living standards and our unions, growing numbers within the ruling class, often reluctantly, will begin to provide financial and political support to the fascists. They will unleash the energy of the ultraright in the streets, against striking workers, labor gatherings, social protests, and organizations of the oppressed. They will use whatever force and violence is necessary to deny enough democratic rights to the majority of working people, eventually, to preserve the privileges of the upper middle class and maintain capitalist rule….

The workers movement must explain that capitalism is the source of the crisis; it must organize the toilers in a revolutionary struggle to take power out of the hands of the exploiters and establish a workers and farmers government. It must present convincing answers, a working-class alternative, to the demagogy of the Buchanans and the others. Because if labor does not do so—if it offers those being crushed by the capitalist crisis no effective way to fight, and then seems to flub the chances we have to win—we will shove potential class allies into the hands of the rightists. And the working class will be divided and defeated in blood.

This polarization will accelerate the seriousness of workers and youth who come into politics. Young fighters despise the assaults on human solidarity by the ultraright, assaults that stand *against* everything they are reaching *for*. And growing numbers of workers, regardless of their own current political views, will see the need to guarantee space for fellow workers with whom they are fighting shoulder to shoulder—whether these workers are communist or whatever—to raise and discuss their ideas and for all workers to consider where the crisis is heading and what we can do about it.

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters organized united front demonstration at New York German Consulate December 1938 to protest anti-Semitic pogroms.

July BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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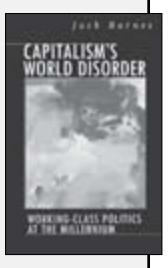

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STATEMENT BY SWP CANDIDATES

Release all Guantánamo prisoners now!

The following statement was issued July 4 by Róger Calero and Maura DeLuca, SWP candidates for U.S. Senator and governor of New York, respectively.

We demand that the U.S. government immediately release the hundreds of prisoners locked up under brutal conditions at its naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Our campaign opposes Washington's plans to conduct drumhead trials against some of these prisoners, denying them the most elementary rights. Such moves, carried out in the name of the "war on terrorism," will be used to attack the rights of working people.

The Supreme Court ruling in the case of Salim Ahmed Hamdan helps further the U.S. capitalist rulers' so-called war on terror. It asks the White House to adjust its procedures for military trials and urges closer collaboration with Congress to provide legislative sanction for such attacks on basic rights. In this way the court decision legitimizes the use of military tribunals as star-chamber proceedings. It does not question the government's authority to maintain its Guantánamo prison camp and hold prisoners there indefinitely as "enemy combatants."

Nearly 500 people have been imprisoned there for more than four years, isolated from the outside world, most without charges. Washington already has on its hands the deaths of three prisoners who, under these inhuman conditions, committed suicide last month.

From the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to the Guantánamo concentration camp, the purpose of Washington's "long war" against "terror" is to defend the interests of the tiny billionaire class that rules the United States. The U.S. capitalists seek to beat down obstacles to their profit-driven quest for control of markets, resources, and territory around the world.

Their offensive abroad is an extension of their attacks at home on the wages, job conditions, and rights workers and farmers need to defend their livelihoods.

In preparation for anticipated resistance to these assaults, the U.S. rulers are taking steps to curtail workers' rights under the banner of "homeland defense." This includes stepped-up domestic use of the military, most recently the National Guard deployment to the border with Mexico to back up *la migra* and to New Orleans to "fight crime." It includes immigration bill provisions that lay the groundwork for a national ID card for all U.S. residents. It includes further centralization of domestic spying against those protesting government policies. Likewise, military courts, secret trials, and "preventive" detentions that deny basic democratic protections are ultimately aimed against working people.

The Socialist Workers Party campaign calls on working people to oppose military tribunals. We demand that Washington immediately release all those jailed at Guantánamo, close the prison camp, and withdraw completely from Guantánamo, which is Cuban territory occupied against the will of that sovereign nation.

Boston-area rally protests cop brutality

Continued from page 2

CPA's board, was among the speakers at the rally. Presentations were translated into English and Chinese. "Is it a crime that we don't look white?" asked Lee. "Some people even in our community think that these youth must have done something wrong. But we know that is not the case. Unprovoked police attacks occur all too often against Asians and other people of color."

Lee called on those present to turn out in large numbers for a preliminary hearing June 27.

Rally co-chairperson Zenobia Lai pointed out that the attack took place on the eve of the massive May 1 nationwide actions for immigrant rights. "This is hardly a coincidence," she said.

Other speakers included Boston city councilor Chuck Turner, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights representative Chuck Walker, Chinatown Residents Association spokesperson Henry Yee, and a parent of the Somerville 5—African-American youth recently assaulted and charged by cops in that municipality north of here.

More than 70 supporters of the Quincy 4 attended the June 27 preliminary hearing on the charges against the youth. Claiming she had not had a chance to review the case, the district attorney asked for a postponement. The new date for the hearing is July 26.

LETTERS

East Timor

The article "Australian troops intervene in East Timor" in the June 19 *Militant* stated that Indonesian forces occupied East Timor in 1975, despite ongoing resistance. Because of illusions here over Canberra's pretensions to be a "savior" of East Timorese independence by its 1999 and 2006 military interventions, an important point needs to be explained.

Timor Leste was briefly independent as Portuguese colonial forces withdrew in 1975. Australia's rulers reacted with alarm at the prospect of an independent government arising on their doorstep out of resistance by working people to colonial rule.

The subsequent takeover of Timor Leste by the semicolonial military regime in Jakarta was a proxy invasion for imperialism, not "Indonesian expansionism." Jakarta's belligerence was encouraged, aided, and abetted by the governments of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

The 25-year-long Indonesian occupation received full imperialist backing. After the military regime in Jakarta crumbled, the East Timorese people seized the moment and voted for independence in 1999. Australia's rulers, backed by Washington, made a shift to avert a deeper crisis. Australian, New Zealand, and other troops intervened to allow emasculated independence, and to shore up stability for the pro-imperialist government in Jakarta and broader imperialist influence and investments in the region.

Another article in the May 8 *Militant* said "the rulers of Australia now regard [the Solomon Islands] as 'in their back yard.'" But the Australian rulers have always arrogantly regarded the southwest Pacific as part of their profiteering domain.

Ron Poulsen
Sydney, Australia

Darby No. 1 Mine

While selling the *Militant* at the Pittsburg and Midway coal mine near Birmingham, Alabama, a miner, originally from Harlan County, Kentucky, made a correction to the first article on the recent mine disaster in Harlan County. He said the Darby No. 1 Mine where the blast took place was owned by the Napier family, not by Arch Minerals (which owns Lone Mountain Processing).

A quick research showed the mine used to be owned by Arch Minerals. But since May 18, 2001, the license to operate the Darby No. 1 Mine has been issued to Ralph Napier. My search also brought up a whole slough of lawsuits and MSHA fines related to safety violations at that mine, including a December 2004 legal filing against Arch Coal by the widow and minor child of Gary Merrill, a miner who died there in 1998, after a roof fall.

Walter Blades
Birmingham, Alabama

Cuban libraries

Congratulations for your work in defense of Cuban libraries—the real ones, not the fake ones—and for that terrific article by Jonathan Silberman ("Librarians answer smear campaign against Cuban gov't" in June 19 *Militant*), which is much appreciated here in Cuba. It was picked up and distributed by *Cubarte*, an important newsletter on the island's politics and culture that is widely distributed.

Readers interested in Cuba might want to subscribe to their weekly bulletin where the *Militant* article was posted (http://www.cubarte.cult.cu/eng/index.php).

Walter Lippmann
Havana, Cuba

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

ing people of severe "belt-tightening" ahead.

The government and both colonial parties—the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PPD), which controls the governor's office, and the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP), which dominates Congress—have used the $740 million budget deficit as a club to impose a sales tax. The U.S. bond rating agency Moody's gave them a hand by downgrading Puerto Rican government bonds to junk status.

Both parties have wrangled over the exact amount of the tax, each posturing as acting out of concern for workers. PPD leaders, claiming to be worried about having enough funds to pay public employees, said a 7 percent tax would be "a victory for the Puerto Rican people." PNP officials proposed a tax of "only" 5.5 percent "so as not to harm irreparably our working class," as House of Representatives president José Aponte put it. The dispute has gone to the island's Supreme Court for resolution.

The government lockout surprised many of the leaders of Puerto Rico's unions, who acted as if the administration was bluffing when it threatened mass layoffs. The unions organized protests, including one on May 1, calling for more taxes on corporations.

Starting on July 1, Puerto Rico's water and sanitation authority raised residential water service rates by 38 percent. The agency said it was seeking to become "self-sufficient" and no longer dependent on government subsidies.

U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico has meant a deteriorating water system. In a telling acknowledgment of these conditions, the water utility said the rate increase would help improve delivery for some of the 70,000 households with "deficient" service. Deficient was defined as "not having water for three or more days a week," the San Juan daily *El Nuevo Día* reported July 1.

The rate hike is only the latest in a series of austerity measures pushed by the Puerto Rican government and Washington, including other utility rate increases, moves to slash government jobs, and university tuition hikes.

Union leaders jailed

Two weeks before the water rate increase, a federal court in Puerto Rico convicted and jailed 10 former top officials of the Independent Authentic Union (UIA), the water workers union, on charges of misappropriation of the union's health-care fund. In October 2004, during a hard-fought strike by the UIA against the water authority's proposal to turn over the medical plan to a private outfit, FBI agents had raided the union headquarters and carted off files, which they used to prosecute the union officers.

Spokespeople for U.S. capitalists, for whom Puerto Rico serves as a profitable source of superexploited labor to produce pharmaceuticals and other manufactured goods, have used the "fiscal crisis" to call for a more open assault on what the British magazine *The Economist* called Puerto Rico's "oversized welfare state."

In a May 27 article titled "Trouble on Welfare Island," the *Economist* article complained that Puerto Rico, where manufacturing accounts for 42 percent of economic output, has become less competitive as a source of profits than Ireland, south Korea, and other semicolonial nations. The reason, it said, was "generous" federal payments. Noting that "around 30% of the territory's jobs are in the public sector," it called for an offensive against a "coddled bureaucracy"—meaning the unions, which in Puerto Rico are concentrated among public employees.

Washington's social welfare measures were instituted after World War II to guarantee social stability, undercut the independence movement, and make Puerto Rico a lucrative source of investment. Even after cutbacks over the past decade, federal payments that include food stamps and housing subsidies make up more than 20 percent of total personal income on the island.

"The result is lots of idle poor," the *Economist* stated. "Many families do not view the federal handouts as temporary."

The business magazine reported that annual income per person was $12,000 in 2004, less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest U.S. state. More than 48 percent of Puerto Rico's people remain under the federal poverty line—a proportion nearly four times higher than in the United States.

Joblessness is officially 12 percent, and the real figure is much higher if it includes discouraged workers who have given up actively looking for work.